

<p style="text-align: center;">FACT SHEET AB 667 (Assembly Member Block): Oral Health: Fluoride Varnish Application</p>
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Summary:

AB 667 would clarify who may apply fluoride varnish once it has been prescribed by a dentist or physician in order to expand its use in public and school-based health programs to prevent and control dental disease. AB 667 is sponsored by the California Dental Association.

Problem:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that tooth decay is the most common chronic disease in our nation's children - five times more prevalent than asthma. Tooth decay affects more than 50 percent of California's children by kindergarten, with low-income children at the greatest risk for decay. When left untreated, decay may cause chronic pain, infection, failure to thrive and delayed growth, school absenteeism, the inability to concentrate and interference with intellectual tasks.

Tooth decay prevention requires optimal exposure to fluoride. In addition to access to fluoridated water, people with high-risk factors for tooth decay benefit most from the application of fluoride varnish, a specific form of topical fluoride that is applied two to four times a year. Studies show that fluoride varnish reduces decay by up to 50 percent in the permanent teeth of moderate/high-risk populations. Fluoride varnish is inexpensive and safe even for the very youngest children. The application process is safe, quick, simple, requires no special dental equipment and minimal instruction.

While fluoride varnish has proven to be more effective than fluoride rinses or supplements for high-risk populations, the latter are still used most frequently in community and school-based health program settings because non-healthcare providers such as teachers, parents and volunteers may legally administer rinses and supplements. However, non-healthcare providers have not been permitted to administer fluoride varnish because the law is currently unclear whether it is legal for them to do so. Restricting non-healthcare providers from applying fluoride varnish creates a needless barrier to the expansion of fluoride varnish programs to the high-risk populations who would benefit the most from this form of fluoride.

Solution:

This bill would clarify current law to ensure non-healthcare professionals may apply fluoride varnish once a prescription and established protocol have been issued for its use in public health and school-based settings. This simple clarification would create a cost-effective and safe opportunity to help reduce dental disease in high-risk populations.

For More Information Contact:

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